



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ANTOINE JOSEPH WIERTZ.

ON the 22d of February, 1806, in the city of Dinant, was born of humble parentage that remarkable man and artist, Antoine Joseph Wiertz. Some writers have claimed for Liège the honor of his birthplace, and the fact that one of his grandest works, "The Conflict between the Forces of Heaven and Hell," was bestowed upon that city, would seem to be an argument in favor of the assertion; possibly the fact itself is responsible for the rumor. Of his parents there is no record, and there is no reason to think his genius was inherited. Poverty he did inherit; but to Wiertz such an inheritance could hardly have seemed an evil, for, with all the fertility of his fancy, prolific as was his pencil, he lived and died a poor man, selling of his works only his portraits, and producing of these merely a sufficient number to insure himself and, in her old age, his mother a meagre support. This fact alone has caused him to be accused of great eccentricity. He possessed, indeed, the eccentricity of true genius, that lives through the expression of its art, finding therein all good. The man whose heart and life are so filled must truly seem "eccentric" to the crowd.

Wiertz's genius was precocious: at four years old the boy sketched with facility, at ten painted a portrait, and two years later was engraving (on wood) his own pictures. At fourteen his art education was begun at the Academy of Antwerp, under Herreyns

and Van Brée. He remained here until 1832, when, having won its great prize, he set out for Italy.

The art treasures of Paris could not be overlooked, and Wiertz spent some time in that city, devoting himself to the study of art in the Louvre. The next few years he passed in Rome, producing many pictures—largely historical subjects, handled for the most part in a masterly manner—and giving plenty of work to the critics; for the undeniable genius of this extraordinary man combined with originality of expression, deep philosophic thought, and poetic feeling a weird fancy that indulged itself by turns in the fantastic, the grotesque, and the horrible.

In the year 1837, Wiertz was nominated member of the Academy of San Luca, at Rome, shortly after which event he returned to his native land, establishing himself in Brussels, where, in 1848, the Government, influenced by the enthusiasm excited by the exhibition of his masterpiece, "The Triumph of Christ," built him a studio, on condition that he would leave his pictures to the State. This studio, constructed after designs made by him from one of the ruined temples of Pæstum, is now known as the Wiertz Museum. Wiertz lived here with his mother, and within these walls many of his most characteristic paintings were produced.

In 1839 the artist executed two of his largest works, one a triptych,—the centre representing "The Entombment



ROMAN GIRL AT THE WINDOW.

From the Painting by Wiertz.

Engraved for THE CONNOISSEUR by Emma S. Dix.

of Christ;" the wings, "Eve after the Fall" and "Christ as Conqueror of Death." The second picture was that great work, "Greeks and Trojans contending for the Body of Patroclus." This picture was raffled for at the time of the Rubens Festival at Antwerp. There were fifteen hundred shares sold, and each subscriber received a fac-simile of the painting, engraved on stone by the artist himself.

There are also of this period four small pictures of the romantic genre,—two known as "Quasimodo" and "Esmeralda;" the third, "Roman Girl at the Window" (page 126); the fourth, "The Fable of the Three Wishes."

In 1842, Wiertz exhibited in Brussels "The Martyrdom of St. Dionysius," and in the same year "The Conflict between the Forces of Heaven and Hell." This canvas is fifty feet high. The artist produced this gigantic work in eighteen days: in it all the wealth of his fancy, the power of his genius, is revealed. Wiertz gave this picture to the city of Liège, where he passed some years, although he returned to Brussels and died there. The next large painting was "The Struggle for the Prize," from the Iliad, painted at Liège, and sent to Brussels.

Others of his pictures are "The Carnival of Rome," "Precipitate Inhumation," "A Scene in Hell," "The Birth of the Passions," "The Man of the Future regarding the Things of the Past," "The Last Cannon," "The Flight into Egypt," "Golgotha," "Christ as Judge," "Genius of Art," "Thoughts and Visions of a Head Cut Off," "The Burnt Child," "A Second after Death," "Hunger, Folly,

and Crime." The picture commonly known as "Les Anges rebelles" is one of the great artistic features of the modern Belgian school.

In 1840 he wrote his "Eulogy of Rubens," for which he received the prize medal of the Antwerp Academy; the same year the order of knighthood was conferred upon him by King Leopold.

In 1863 his essay entitled "L'École flamande de Peinture" was crowned by the Royal Academy of Belgium.

Wiertz's pictures evince deep philosophic thought, ideality, and power as a colorist; the latter characteristic won for him the title of the modern Rubens. Rubens and Michael Angelo were his models, and the influence of these great masters is apparent in his works. It is reported of Wiertz that when the Salon rejected his "Greeks and Trojans contending for the Body of Patroclus" he sent a Rubens, signed with his own name; this being also rejected, he wrote a powerful essay, entitled, "La Critique en matières d'art, est-elle possible?"

He was the inventor of a mode of painting known as "peinture mate," combining the merits of fresco and oil, and excluding reflection. There is a work left by him describing the process and its merits. He died in Brussels, June 18, 1865, bequeathing his pictures to the nation, but leaving insufficient money to pay his funeral expenses.

Wiertz's physiognomy was indicative of his character,—grave, sensitive, intellectual—the face of a poet or a painter: his works show that he was both.

F. DIX SCHUYLER.